AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

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AGITATE! EDUCATE! ORGANIZE!

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WILL THE PEOPLE FAVOR SENATE GAG?

The theatrical plea of the new vice president for a revision of the senate rules, in the alleged interest of "efficiency," was not an impulsive outburst.

Since the foundation of the government free discussion has been the senate's policy. There is no question but this has been used unwisely, but the remedy in these instances are insignificant, as compared with the numerous defeats of anti-social proposals that have been urged by reaction.

There are evils resulting from free speech and free press, but these, too, are insignificant as compared with the evils that the majority would inflict through censorship.

Senators may now end debate whenever there is a substantial demand. Under a senate rule, 16 senators may sign a petition that a vote be taken to close debate on any pending measure.

If that vote indicates that two-thirds of the senators favor this procedure, a total of but one hour is then allowed each senator to discuss the pending measure and all amendments thereto. No dilatory motion or tactics shall be in order.

Even this rule is unsatisfactory to those who would avoid publicity.

The Dawes attack on the senate rules fits into reaction's general policy of bringing the law-making branch into popular contempt and centralizing all power in the executive.

The public is being educated to the theory that the law-making branch must be subordinate to the executive; that the latter shall be "the man on horseback," and that congress, through majority rule, must gag every protest and jam through any measure he proposes.

Any law maker who refuses to accept this process shall be denied patronage and shall be driven from public life. With unusual frankness, the Wall Street Journal, in its June 10, 1924, issue, boasted of the new policy when it said:

> "There is business in politics now. . . . It (business) proposes that the president shall govern the United States and it is taking steps to make its will effective."

That this policy is non-partisan is indicated by John W. Davis, in his acceptance speech at Clarksburg, W. Va., last summer:

> "An executive who can not or will not lead, a congress that can not and will not follow—how can good government exist under such conditions?"

An executive might be molded to suit the wishes of reaction, but a fearless, non-partisan minority in the law-making branch can block special privilege.

To gag this minority it is necessary to revise the senate rules and create the popular impression that the people's direct representatives are incompetents and should be treated as excess baggage that hampers the executive.

JUDGES "NOT NECESSARILY ALWAYS WISE," NATION'S HIGH COURT FRANKLY STATES

Washington, March 14.—In upholding the right of the president to pardon persons convicted of criminal contempt, the United States supreme court shattered two popular illusions.

In terms that the most excitable defender of the judiciary can understand, the court let it be known that it does not look upon judges as supermen.

The administration of justice by the courts is not necessarily always wise," said Chief Justice Taft, who delivered the opinion.

The court acknowledged that because judges are human the personal element is liable to sway their judgments. This position is in contrast to the silliness and hysteria of those who consider any criticism of courts and judges an assault upon our institutions.

The chief justice shattered another illusion when he declared that the three branches of our government are not independent and are not separate. He said the federal constitution makes no such claim, and that the normal operation of government makes it impossible to attain complete independence and separation.

The decision was made in the case of Philip Grossman, Chicago, who disobeyed a court order by continuing to violate the national prohibition act. He was fined $1,000 and sentenced to one year in jail for contempt by the federal district court. The jail portion of the sentence was set aside by President Coolidge on condition that the fine be paid. This was done and Grossman was discharged.

The Chicago court refused to recognize the president's pardon on the ground that the judiciary must have the power to enforce its orders. Grossman was rearrested and the case was carried to the United States supreme court on habeas corpus proceedings.

The supreme court ordered Grossman released on the ground that the president has exercised his pardoning power in criminal contempt cases for 75 years.

"The administration of justice by the courts is not necessarily always wise or certainly considerate of circumstances which may properly mitigate guilt," Chief Justice Taft said. "To afford a remedy, it has always been thought essential in popular governments, as well as in monarchies, to vest in some other authority than the court's power to ameliorate or avoid particular criminal judgments. It is a check entrusted to the executive for special cases. To exercise it to the extent of destroying the deterrent effect of judicial punishment would be to pervert it; but to disregard it altogether is useful must have full discretion to exercise it. Our constitution confers this discretion on the highest officer in the nation in confidence that he will not abuse it."

The supreme court herein acknowledges that it is well for some one to sit in judgment over certain of its decisions.

But angry protests are heard when any portion of our citizens suggest that the same principle be applied to other decisions, as our courts, in the words of Chief Justice Taft, "are not necessarily always wise."

Millions Lost by Treasury Laxness; Large Interests Evade Income Tax

Washington, March 14.—An economy program and law enforcement could be applied to the United States treasury with benefit to taxpayers, according to evidence presented to the Couzens special investigating committee of the senate.

It is shown that the Atlantic, Gulf and West Indies Steamship company was permitted to satisfy an assessment of $9,913,841 for $2,600,000.

It was also alleged that William Boyce Thompson of New York a former chairman of the finance committee of the Republican national committee, failed to make returns on profit of $600,000 on the sale of mineral lands.

The attorneys for the senate committee stated that the ship company's income had been understated and the payment of taxes evaded by failure to report profits on sale of ships; reserves set up out of income; the failure to capitalize permanent improvements, instead of which they charged as expenses; excessive depreciation charges and the failure to report on income profit resulting from liquidation dividends paid by the Mexican navigation company.

Senator Couzens, chairman of the committee, said this was the most astounding case he could possibly conceive of.

It was also shown that the government lost at least $50,000,000 through erroneous deduction allowances to big copper interests. The Anaconda copper company was the largest beneficiary of this process. The committee's experts showed that copper and silver mine managements over-valued their properties and officials generally used this as a tax basis. Subordinate officials favored a revaluation of silver mines, but this was stopped by Secretary of the Treasury Mellon in an order issued by him on April 11, last year.

Oil companies used the same methods to reduce their income tax payments. These corporations "set up a valuation for depletion purposes which is absurd in the extreme," according to consulting engineers for the senate committee.

The steel trust and other corporations were likewise favored, according to evidence submitted to the committee.

AMERICA'S VITAL PRINCIPLES IN IMMORTAL DECLARATION

Washington, March 14.—"The constitution is not the charter of American liberties. Our independence and our liberties antedate the constitution. The fundamentals of Americanism are to be found in the preamble to the Declaration of Independence and in the first 10 amendments to the constitution. The constitution was designed merely as a vehicle to convey American principles."

These statements were included in a speech by Congressman Huddleston in the closing hours of the last congress, in which he favored teaching the Declaration of Independence with the constitution in public schools.

Congressman Winslow introduced a resolution urging the teaching of the constitution in public schools, but he refused to accept Mr. Huddleston's inclusion of the Declaration.

"Americanism did not have its origin in the constitution," declared the Alabama congressman. "No study of the constitution alone will give any clear understanding of the significance of America. To understand our country we must go back to the beginnings of Anglo-Saxon history. We must understand the tribesman's sturdy spirit of equality, his stand at Agincourt against the background of Magna Charta and the long and tedious struggle of the English commons for liberty. We must study the English bill of rights. We must read the story of Bacon's rebellion in early colonial days, and thence through the account of the conflict with Andros, and on down through the writings of Samuel Adams, Jefferson, Henry and Payne, which culminated in the Declaration of Independence. This done, America will stand in its true light. The least that is needed is the study of the constitution, for therein is enshrined, preserve and effectuate the principles taught by the revolutionary forefathers and won upon revolutionary battle fields.

"The builders of the constitution created little faith in the document merely gave new form and expression to that which already existed.

"The most important contribution made by the constitution to the science of government lies in the separation of the functions of the legislative, executive and judicial branches. This was the one important thing that the constitution did. Yet we find that the 'constitution worshipers' furnish the main support for the effort to subject congress to the influence of the executive. And, strange though the psychology may seem, they speak of the courts with bated breath and hold in the odor of sanctity the judicial branch, while holding in contempt the legislative branch, the members of which are the only officials whom the people are allowed to vote for and who are therefore their only representatives.

"What an absurdity, then, to teach the constitution—the mere shell of our political life—and leave the child in ignorance of the kernel of its principles. Such instruction is bound to leave the child with a distorted idea of American fundamentals.

"Even at this particular time the schools of the country resound with declamations on the constitution in competition incited and financed by those who seek to elevate the constitution into a position of undue reverence and an atmosphere of sacro-sanctity. The Winslow measure is merely a part of the same sanctity.

"I believe in the constitution, not as an end but as a means; not because it is but for that which it protects and supports. I believe in the sacredness of the institutions, not in their form but in their substance.

"I would not set children to chasing shadows and to the study of legal technicalities. The world will never lack for constitutionists. What it needs and must ever breed, is men of adequate spiritual life and a higher conception of duty and of service to our fellow creatures."

HAND-PICKED "UNION" BASED ON AUTOCRACY

Baltimore, March 14.—The Baltimore Sun associates the company "union" with "paternalism" and "veiled dictatorship." In an editorial discussion of the recent supreme court decision which permits the Pennsylvania railroad to only recognize its company "union," the Sun said:

"If orthodox trade unionism is now to be regarded as an unwarranted institution there can be no assurance of uniformity in the bargaining power of labor as opposed to management. The railroad co-operating with the national unions must negotiate on the basis of reason. One road may recognize only the company 'unions' which it fosters may dictate terms by force.

"There is no question that employe morale, and in consequence general efficiency, is high on those roads which have chosen the method of co-operation with the recognized trade unions.

"The issue behind the supreme court decision, therefore, is whether it will be interpreted as a brief for the company 'union' idea, which is much more likely to be repudiated in its best and veiled dictatorship at its worst than an encouragement of real collective bargaining. In their work for the success of the B. & O. plan and the B. & O. co-operative plan, the shop crafts have given indisputable evidence that they can act constructively in the interests of the railroads and the general public.

"With such examples before the country, it is unlikely that the verdict in Washington can be twisted into a general indictment of orderly co-operation through the long-established labor organizations.

"In the last analysis the method chosen by the railroad giving most efficient service will win out. And in the opinion of impartial observers, the Baltimore & Ohio, which prefers trade unions to company 'unions,' stands in the front rank in this respect."

BOSSES HAVE LABEL TO CONFUSE PUBLIC

Washington, March 14.—A combination of anti-union garment manufacturers and former convicts have organized the international association of garment manufacturers and are attempting to exploit the agitation for the trade union label and against prison labor. The association has a label with this inscription: "Made by free labor. I. A. G. M. Not by prisoners." This label is placed on shirts and overalls handled by members of the association.

The label is not registered and is not indorsed by organized labor. It does not bear the name of the allied printing trades, and it can be secured by any manufacturer who is permitted to comply with regulations, working conditions and wage standards.

"There is nothing to prevent members of the association from buying prison-made goods and attaching their label thereto," said John J. Manning, secretary-treasurer of the union label trades department, A. F. of L. "This label," Mr. Manning continued, "is a perversion of the power of our agitation for the bona fide trade union label, which stands for collective bargaining and working conditions that the trade union movement has established.

"As the demand for the union label becomes more insistent, fake labels may bewilder and confuse consumers. In the present case, organized workers of the country should see that the label of the United Garment Workers of America is on shirts and overalls."

MANY WAGE DISPUTES THREATEN ENGLAND

London, England, March 14.—Wage disputes in an increasing number are threatening England, and it is feared that a clash in several of the larger industries is inevitable. Railway men, miners, machinery workers, ship builders and gas workers are involved in these movements. The railway workers and miners are attempting to coordinate their efforts, while the employers would divide them. The miners are told that their wage raises would mean higher wages, and the railway men are assured that the miners stand between them and progress.

The Labor Press Service, issued by the British Trades Union Congress and the Labor party, declares that the case for an upward wage movement is "overwhelming." It says:

"It is the unions' tactics, their coordination and their unity of purpose that will play the biggest part in deciding the issue," says the L. P. S.

LABOR WILL CONTINUE FIGHT FOR CHILDREN

Seattle, March 14.—Organized labor is arranging a state-wide campaign in favor of the child labor amendment and the workers are hopeful that at the November meeting of the legislature the law makers will approve the amendment.

President Short of the state federation of labor says women's clubs and other organizations will join with labor in carrying the fight into every legislative district whose representatives voted against it last year.

"It is unnecessary to emphasize," President Short said, "that the recent session of the legislature was under the abject domination of Governor Hartley, who, in turn, seems to be under the equally abject domination of a small element notoriously hostile to the interests of labor."

SPY SYSTEM OPPOSED BY GOVERNOR BLAINE

Madison, Wis., March 14.—In an address to a conference of trade unionists in his city Governor Blaine opposed the formation of a state detective bureau.

"The gravest duty devolving upon public officials today," the governor said, "is to use all legitimate power to check espionage and spy government that is developing in America."

GET ONE WEEK'S VACATION

Chicago, March 14.—One week's vacation with pay features a new contract secured by Meat Cutters' union No. 546. Minimum wage rates are increased.

WANT LABEL PLACED ON PRISON-MADE GOODS

Charleston, W. Va., March 14.—A bill has been introduced in the state legislature to label convict-made goods. The proposal was introduced by Delegate DeLasker of Hardy county, and it provides as follows:

"Section 1. All manufactured articles of every description or kind made or produced, sold or offered for sale within the state of West Virginia, produced or made by prison labor, shall have stamped or printed on said article or articles manufactured or produced, sold or offered for sale, the words 'made by prison labor.'

"Section 2. Any person, persons, firm or firms who shall manufacture, produce, sell or offer for sale any article or articles manufactured or produced by prison labor not stamped as required by section one of this act shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be fined not more than $100 for the first offense, and $500 for each subsequent offense. Every sale or offer for sale of any article so manufactured or produced shall constitute a distinct and separate offense. All acts or parts of acts within the state view hereof and inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed."

NON-UNION MINES LEAD IN FATALITIES

Charleston, W. Va., March 14.—The non-union mines in the state lead in their record for fatalities. The January report of the state department of mines supports the claim by organized coal miners that the non-union coal owners pay no attention to safety laws.

Of the 46 lives lost in January, 45 fatalities occurred in the non-union mines. McDowell county, leader of the anti-union group, led in the death list. Logan county, next in its record as a thug-controlled section, was a close second in deaths. The same proportion of anti-unionism and fatalities was recorded in Fayette, Payne and Kanawha and other counties where free government is unknown.

CHILDREN CAN NOT LABOR

Trenton, N. J., March 14.—By a vote of 11 to 10, the house rejected Assemblyman Campbell's proposal that children between the ages of 10 and 14 be permitted to do "light work" outside of school hours. The author of the bill represents Passaic county, in which the mill town of Paterson is located.

HORSESHOERS WILL MEET

Cincinnati, March 14.—Officers of the International Union of Journeymen Horseshoers have called the forty-seventh convention to be held in this city beginning Monday, July 20.

FOES OF CHILD LABOR ARE NOT DISCOURAGED

Washington, March 14.—Reports to A. F. of L. headquarters indicate that advocates of the child labor amendment are not discouraged by the wave of propaganda and misrepresentation that has been launched against this movement. Foes of the amendment realize that their frenzy will eventually spend its force, and they are studying new methods of legislative attack that respond to the popular will.

There are many precedents for a state legislature changing its position on a constitutional amendment. The constitution provides that when 36 states of the states adopt a constitutional change, the secretary of state shall proclaim that the amendment has been adopted. The constitution, however, makes no provision for the secretary of state proclaiming the defeat of an amendment, nor does the constitution set a limit on the time in which an amendment must be voted on.

This worries foes of the child labor amendment, who note the determination of friends of the measure to wage a long contest. Efforts were made in the congress just adjourned to make it impossible for legislatures to change their position on an amendment. This was the Wadsworth-Garrett resolution. It was defeated by the A. F. of L.

BOYCOTT EMPLOYERS WHO INCREASE WAGES

Washington, March 14.—Leading building contractors and construction financiers in the nation's capital have combined to block wage increases.

Any subcontractor who grants wage increases can not secure loans.

Investigation by committees of the present congress revealed that the reason for high rents in this city is the pyramiding of mortgages.

A senate committee discovered that 33 apartments were mortgaged for an aggregate of $9,000,000 more than their sales price. In other cases cases showed fictitious mortgages encumbered property from 13 to as high as 307 per cent above the sales price.

Interest on these debts, based on inflated values, are paid by tenants while the owners assure the public that "high wages" is responsible for exorbitant rentals.

INTERSTATE BUSSES BEYOND STATE CONTROL

Washington, March 14.—The United States supreme court has denied the right of the states to interfere with interstate commerce passing over their highways in motor vehicles.

The court held that Maryland can not refuse to permit such vehicles to use its highways, and that the states of its roads is a valid exercise of its police powers.

One effect of the decision will probably be that state public utilities commissions can not permit a monopoly of bus transportation, and that any individual may enter this business.

FUR WORKERS INSTALL UNEMPLOYMENT PAY

New York, March 14.—Unemployment insurance in the fur industry has been established by employers and organized employees.

The employers contribute one and one-half per cent of the weekly pay roll and deduct a like amount from the wage of each employe. This fund is administered by a joint committee under rules acceptable to both parties.

ELECTROTYPERS RAISE WAGES

Fort Wayne, Ind., March 14.—Electrotypers have raised wages 42 a week and established an apprentice rate of $25 for the second year, $28 for the third year, $32 for the fourth year and $35 for the fifth year.

ORGANIZED LABOR WILL ERECT GROUP OF CO-OPERATIVE HOUSES

New York, March 14.—Organized workers in this city are arranging to build a group of cooperative apartments. This movement is backed by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' union, International Fur Workers' union, Cloth Hat, Hat and Millinery Workers' International union and other organizations. It will be financed by a union bank. A plot of land, one block square, in one of the most desirable sections of the city has been purchased, and the unionists will incorporate a building organization under the state laws. The board of directors of this corporation will be the representatives of the interested unions.

Plans for the apartments contemplate use of only 30 per cent of the land for the buildings, leaving a central park that will include 70 per cent of the entire block. This will provide adequate playgrounds for children. The building will be five stories high and will contain 200 to 2000 apartments of three to seven rooms each. Laundry facilities will be provided in the cellar of the building. There will be hot drying rooms and individual compartments for each tenant.

The plan on which the building will be conducted calls for a down payment of $150 to $200 per room, and payment thereafter of $10 to $15 per room per month. The tenant will be the owner of the apartment, and the monthly payment will cover all upkeep, wear and tear, depreciation, heat and light, besides providing payments for amortizing the mortgage on such apartment. With the tenant's equity in the apartment constantly growing, he will eventually own his apartment free and clear.

MINE GUARDS DOOMED, NEW GOVERNOR SAYS

Charleston, W. Va., March 14.—In his inaugural address as governor of this state, Howard M. Gore indicated the reign of mine guards and private detectives employed by anti-union coal owners is doomed. The governor said:

"It is my information that in certain sections of the state persons paid by individuals or concerns are vested with the same or similar police authority as that exercised by regularly constituted officers of the law. Such authority can be vested safely in but one agency, and that is government itself, and encroachments upon the authority of government I do not and will not approve."

LABOR LAW DILUTION BLOCKED BY A. F. OF L.

Washington, March 14.—Organized labor's vigilance blocked an attempt to dilute the new compulsory school attendance law that was passed by the last congress.

The law adds work permits issued to children under 16 years of age, and who had not completed the eighth grade of elementary school, were automatically invalidated.

The law intends that these children shall attend school, but the superintendent of schools of the District of Columbia suggested that these children remain at their employment, and that the law be complied with by compelling them to take an intensive course of night schooling.

At a meeting of citizens called to discuss the question, the first objector to the proposal was Edgar Wallace, legislative representative of the A. F. of L.

The trade unionist pointed out that a child between 14 and 16 who had been employed all day would be in no condition to absorb education at night, and that such an interpretation of the law would injure the child, physically and mentally.

Other citizens accepted this viewpoint, and the meeting declared that the law should be interpreted literally and that compulsory night school for these children "is contrary to the best interests of the children of the community."

LAW MAKERS APPROVE CHILD LABOR BILL

Austin, Texas, March 14.—Although the Texas legislature rejected the federal child labor amendment, the agitation for this proposal resulted in the passage of a new state child labor act by both houses of the legislature.

The bill prohibits children under 15 years of age from working in factories, in dangerous pursuits, and in places of amusement. The old law exempting children who work on farms was retained.

UNION "HELLO" GIRLS WIN

Terre Haute, Ind., March 14.—The local union of telephone girls, affiliated with the brotherhood of Electrical Workers, have renewed their union shop agreement and secured a wage increase for operators and supervisors of from 25 per cent.

Failing to reach an agreement, both parties referred the issue to an arbitration board, which upheld the union demands, although the chamber of commerce is conducting a noisy anti-union shop campaign.

The girls held a banquet in their honor last night, the victory and victory to renew their faith in their union.

LAWMAKERS OWNED BY TEXTILE BARONS?

Asheville, N. C., March 14.—"Are law makers of this state controlled by the cotton mill owners?" asks Edward Caldwell of the Asheville Advocate. The labor editor points out that after the law making body of the child labor amendment they have made no attempt to check the state-wide exploitation of children.

"Every worker knows that the law making body of North Carolina is not in session under conditions that cotton mill towns of this state," said Editor Caldwell. "There are many members of the legislature who are in close contact with the cotton mill sections. Why is it that these representatives do not act? Are they controlled by the cotton mill owners? Why are representatives who are not from the cotton mill sections willing to allow these conditions to continue? Are they, too, reached in some way that they are willing to sit idly by and allow the much-talked-of native workers, the real people of North Carolina, to be murdered piece meal?

"The federal amendment to the constitution would curb this exploitation of children. Can these representatives do not want the amendment, and the legislature, at an extra session, refused to ratify? The present legislature has been in session nearly 60 days and no one has had the courage to take the bull by the horns.

"Will the voters of North Carolina permit their representatives to ignore this vital issue? Can these representatives go home with a clear conscience and leave the laws of North Carolina in such a way that manufacturers will be protected in continuing the murder of women and little children?"

PRISON-MADE PRODUCTS OPPOSED BY BUSINESS

Kansas City, Mo., March 14.—Opposition to convict labor products in competition with free labor products was received by the manufacturers' committee of the local chamber of commerce. These business men declare that the employment of convicts be confined to the manufacture of goods for state use.

WANT RIGHT TO JOIN UNION

Madison, Wis., March 14.—At a conference of Wisconsin trade unionists, vigorous dissent was registered against a bill before the legislature that would prohibit state, city and county employes from joining a trade union. Another objectionable bill would make each member of a trade union liable to conviction for the misdemeanor of a fellow-member.